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My name is Dohn Hoyle. I have the privilege to serve as the Executive Director/CEO of The Arc Michigan. The association has worked with and on behalf of persons with disabilities and their families for more than 63 years. We have thousands of members and 31 chapters across the State.

We are particularly concerned with HB 4382 and 4384. What alarms us the most is the potential granting to a guardian, who may be a stranger, the authority to judge the quality of life for another person. Giving a guardian this extraordinary power amounting to life or death, over a person with a disability based on their own feelings, views or beliefs is frightening. To provide such authority without regard to whether the person is terminal is unconscionable.

Persons with disabilities are very subject to stigma, devaluing and even pity. Permitting a person, who may hold these perceptions, to judge for a person with a disability that their life is not worth living or that they would be better dead is the equivalent of a death panel!

The language in EPIC prohibiting guardians from taking or ordering extraordinary measures without specific court authority stemmed from prior abuses. The drafters, stakeholders, including the disability community, and lawmakers included the language for good reason. Allowing guardians in Michigan who have no standards and a checkered history this unfettered authority over the resuscitation of another person must not occur.

We ask that consideration of this current legislation be suspended until such time as appropriate amendments or alteration can be accomplished. On behalf of your fellow citizens with disabilities who are under or may, in the future, be under guardianship please do not take this enormous, inappropriate step backwards.

This exact language has been endorsed by the following organizations:

The Epilepsy Foundation
Michigan Disability Rights Coalition
United Cerebral Palsy/Michigan



a state organization on developmental disabilities affiliated nationally with The Arc

